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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, October 23, 2003

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Patterson resolution seeks to protect Michigan's precious water resources

Lansing – Acting upon a concurrent resolution offered by Sen. Bruce Patterson (R-Canton), the Michigan Legislature resolved this week to protect the Great Lakes from further exposure to invasive species.

Due to a failure in the Environmental Protection Agency to comprehend the seriousness of the foreign threat, the state Legislature is directing Congress to take corrective action.

Specifically, Patterson's Senate Concurrent Resolution 11 calls upon Congress to close a loophole Patterson called "large enough for a freighter to sail through."

"Michigan is working hard to prevent non-native aquatic species from invading our Great Lakes and connecting waterways," Patterson said. "The EPA rules are undermining our efforts."

EPA rules allow ballast water discharges incidental to normal operations.

"We can't get rid of invaders like the zebra mussel or the round goby when the federal government keeps rolling out the red carpet for them," Patterson said. The Great Lakes are the largest freshwater system in the world and a precious natural resource. Washington needs to stop treating them like a dumping ground."

Many groups are working to repeal the EPA exemption, which weakens state and federal laws preserving and protecting Michigan's natural resources. The repeal of the exemption was one of the recommendations of the Great Lakes Conservation Task Force.

The EPA ruled as recently as September 2003 that the ballast-water discharges can continue in the Great Lakes.

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